

Director's Message - January 2009

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As you know, the Legislature is currently considering budget cuts to Human Services as a result of the economic downturn. On Monday, January 12, our appropriations subcommittee announced their recommendations for a 15% or \$44 million cut in the FY 2010 base budget of Human Services.



In December, Governor Huntsman announced a plan for a cut slightly below 7% or \$17 million, with one time money backfilling some of those cuts. Those two competing plans will now play out over the upcoming legislative session.

Our strategy is as follows: 1) keep essential services in place, 2) articulate the positive outcomes that are achieved by Human Services in improving our community, 3) explain the good investment that Human Services represents to the taxpayers, and 4) ask the Legislature to consider allowing us to use some one-time money to patch critical services until the economy improves.

I am proud of the work we do at Human Services and I appreciate the community's support. We rely on many important partners, such as counties, private providers, charitable organization, and individuals, to care for the most needy and vulnerable in our society. We need to pull together more than ever. Support for the Governor's approach is appreciated. I am hopeful that the community will support our strategy and keep Utah's quality of life intact.

To our employees, I am asking that you continue to do your usual excellent work and stay positive. Our clients need to be reassured that the core services will remain. Because of the difficult economic times, clients are anxious and budget cut discussions just add to that. Thanks for all you do to maintain services. I would also invite any DHS employees who have ideas about efficiencies or temporary reductions to forward those ideas on. Let your supervisor or division manager know, or e-mail me directly, I am always open to these ideas and I think the knowledge you have as employees may be the key to getting through the downturn. Thanks for all you do!